Darjeeling, Shillong, Kohima and other parts of North East; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. For the development of tourist facilities which will benefit both domestic and foreign tourists, Government of India, Department of Tourism have agreed in principle provide central financial assistance during 1996-97 for the following projects/ schemes in the North Eastern States :

Assam

1. Upgradation cum expension of tourist facilities at Kaziranga.
2. Upgradation of sound and light show at Talatal Ghar at Sibsagar.
3. Purchase of 10 elephants for Kaziranga Manas, Orang and Tobitora.

Arunachal Pradesh

1. Tourist Complex at Passighat

Manipur

1 Construction of Health Resort at Imphal

Meghalaya

1 Land scaping of Umiam Lake Resort
2 Expansion of Pine Wood Hotel
3 Expansion of Orchid Lake Resort, Umiam
4 Expansion of Orchid Lodge, Tura
5 Master Plan for Shillong and Chirapunji (including feasibility for a Cable Car on Umiam Lake)

Mizoram

1 Tourist home at Lunglei
2 Tourist cottages at Hnahthiae

Nagaland

1 Development of water falls at Sedima (Dimapur)
2 Development of water falls at Chumukedima (Dimapur).

Tripura

1 View point at Betalongchipp under Phuldangshi division highest peak in Tripura.
2. Cafetaria with public conveniences with in Neermahal Complex.

Darjeeling

1 Repair, renovation and up of facilities at Tiger Hill Pavilion, Darjeeling and use it as the base for trekking in the adjoining areas.
2. Provision of eco-friendly and renewable energy sources such as wind generated power and solar lanterns at different tourist facilities in far flung places etc.
3. Expansion of Kalimpong Tourist Lodge/Morgan House at Kalimpong Darjeeling Distt.

Star T.V. Network

935. SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI
SHRI SURESH KALMADI

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have granted permission to STAR TV network organisation to shift their uplinking project to Tumkur in Karnataka from Hongkong;

(b) if so, the terms and conditions thereof; and

(c) the benefits likely to be accrued to India due to that?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M IBRAHIM) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Violation of Safety Norms

936. SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI
DR. RAM KRISHNA KUSMARIA

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received complaints that some private airlines are allegedly violating the air safety norms;

(b) if so, the details of such complaints received during 1996 so far, and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M IBRAHIM) : (a) and (b) During 1996 (till date) there have been only two violations of air safety norms by private airlines involving MESCO Airlines and East West Airlines. A pilot of MESCO Airlines flew an Ecureuil helicopter on 6.1.1996 without a valid flight release, carried out underslung operation for which the helicopter was not equipped and undertook night flight without ATC service. An East West Airlines B-737 aircraft while on a flight from Delhi to Bangalore on 2.1.1996 landed with the left main wheel on the ground outside the runway.

(c) Licences of the pilot/co-pilot involved have been suspended. Various measures such as monitoring of flight recorders, issuance of Civil Aviation Requirements, safety audit of operators, conducting safety seminars/

meetings, inspection of aerodromes etc. are continuously taken to enhance air safety.

Private Airlines

937. SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the services rendered by private airlines in the country is not upto the mark;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the air services on Nagpur-Bombay and Bombay-Delhi routes which are presently operated by private airlines are completely unsatisfactory and there are demands that Indian Airlines should start its operation on these routes; and

(d) if so, the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) and (b). There have been some complaints relating to cancellation of flights, punctuality, etc. against private airlines.

(c) and (d). Besides private operators, Indian Airlines is already operating on Nagpur-Mumbai and Mumbai-Delhi sectors.

Services of Handicapped

938. SHRI PARASRAM BHARDWAJ : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to utilise the services of handicapped on Television Broadcasting;

(b) if so, whether any survey has been conducted or proposed to be made to find out such persons; and

(c) if so, the details thereof, and if not the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) Television being a visual medium, there is no bar for engaging persons who are otherwise qualified if their handicap were not to interfere with the discharge of their duties/performance. However, many handicapped persons are being provided opportunities to participate in music programmes and to act in serials and telefilms etc. depending on requirements of the programme/script.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

ISD and STD Lines

939. PROF. AJIT KUMAR MEHTA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a racket involving ISD and STD call bills amounting to crores of rupees passed on to various subscribers in connivance with the MTNL employees has been unearthed recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government against those found involved in the racket?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) One case each in Bombay and Delhi for diversion of telephone lines with the connivance of MTNL employees was detected during 1995 and 1996 respectively.

(b) In Delhi some staff of MTNL were found to be involved in illegal diversion of telephones with STD/ISD through Jor Bagh Exchange by the CBI during the investigation in April, 96.

In Bombay, one telephone was diverted for giving STD/ISD calls by an MTNL employee. The loss incurred was to the tune of Rs. 23 lakhs.

(c) In Delhi, 4 officials involved in diversion were arrested by CBI and subsequently placed under suspension. The private person involved was also subsequently arrested. Further investigation by CBI is in progress.

In Bombay, one Mazdoor was arrested on 11.9.95 and suspended the same day. The official has been prosecuted in the Court of Law by the CBI. Also, disciplinary action for major penalty has been initiated against a Phone Inspector involved in the same case.

Supply of Essential Commodities

940. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA : Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) the details of essential commodities supplied to the consumers through Public Distribution System in the North-Eastern States, particularly in Assam;

(b) whether the irregular and inadequate supply of these essential commodities is the root cause of price-rise of consumer goods;

(c) if so, the steps taken by the Government to ensure the availability of these items at reasonable price;

(d) whether there is any demand to add some more commodities namely Janata Cloth through Public Distribution System; and

(e) if so, the response of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) to (c). The Central Government makes allocation of rice, wheat, sugar, imported edible oil, soft/CIL coke and kerosene oil to States/UTs including North Eastern States for distribution through Public Distribution System